time was whether, in view of the almost certain refusal of the United States to acknowledge their independence, it was not wisest, on the whole, to seize all the posts and property of which they could get possession, or, at least, all which could be acquired without an actual contest,—in other words, whether it was not wisest to begin a war which, was so likely, sooner or later, to be forced upon them.

It is, however, plain that this course not only put the seceding States technically in the wrong, but that it was in reality a substitution of force for those negotiations, which, under the circumstances, seemed fairly to be called for. The United States Government was no trespasser on the soil of the seceding States; the lands occupied by its scanty garrisons had been regularly ceded to it; it was lawfully in possession of them. The forcible occupation of any of these military posts was, therefore, an outrage on the power which held them, and an insult to the flag which covered them. No government could be expected to tolerate such a wholesale appropriation of its military posts,—no nation could be expected tamely to submit to see its flag lowered from its forts, arsenals, and dock-yards. The efteot which this course must inevitably have on the pub-

lic opinion of the North was wholly lost sight of; to speak the truth, it was contemptuously disregarded.